

# NEWS from ED MARKEY

**United States Congress**

**Seventh District, Massachusetts**

For Immediate Release:

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## ***Bush Administration Hangs Up on Consumer Calls for Phone Choice***

The following statement can be attributed to U.S. Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), Ranking Democrat on the House Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the Internet regarding today's decision by the Bush Administration not to seek appeal of the FCC's local telecommunications competition rules:

"Siding yet again with large corporate behemoths over the interests of millions of consumers, the Administration today endorsed a faith-based approach to breaking down monopolies and fostering entrepreneurial investment and consumer choice.

"The Bush Administration's decision not to defend the FCC's telephone competition rules is contrary to precedent and is anti-consumer and anti-investor. It is anti-consumer because some 20 million Americans will ultimately lose the ability under these rules to choose an alternative local phone company, adversely impacting consumer prices. This adverse rate impact will be true even if a consumer still gets phone service from a Bell company because the local competition rules the Bush Administration is abandoning have forced the incumbent phone companies to offer consumers lower prices too.

"This decision is also anti-investor and will dampen capital investment. The telecommunications marketplace is dependent upon regulatory rules ensuring market entry and enforcement. Few investors will risk capital in the future in other telecommunications markets equally dependent upon the FCC's rules because of this decision.

"The Bush Administration had a clear choice: continue to support consumer choice, investment, and job growth in the telecommunications marketplace, or cave in to the pressure being brought by a few large telephone utilities who fear new competition. The Bush Administration today rewards these companies for their years of litigation which have denied consumers the full fruits of telecommunications competition."

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